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ICTJ Launches New Book on Vetting of Public Employees

Volume Sheds Light on Important Transitional Justice Measure

NEW YORK, May 24, 2007—In collaboration with the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) today released *Justice as Prevention: Vetting Public Employees in Transitional Societies*, the latest in a series of transitional justice publications. The new volume examines “vetting,” an institutional reform process for excluding abusive or corrupt employees from public office.

“Rarely does a single volume speak with such moral, historical, and practical authority all at once,” said Christopher Stone, Guggenheim Professor of the Practice of Criminal Justice at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. “*Justice as Prevention* gives us a nuanced look at the complexities of vetting measures in both practice and policy. It not only establishes the importance of vetting as an integral part of transitional justice—on par with criminal prosecutions and truth telling—but it also provides an invaluable, practical set of guidelines for those who take up this crucial work.”

In *Justice as Prevention*, editors Alexander Mayer-Rieckh and Pablo de Greiff present case studies of vetting practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, El Salvador, the former German Democratic Republic, Greece, Hungary, and Poland. In each case, they endeavor to answer the following questions to provide a comparative basis for analysis:

- How was the vetting process designed? How broad was its scope?
- How was vetting justified in this context?
- How did vetting relate to other institutional reforms or transitional justice measures undertaken in that country?

Two additional cases—Argentina and South Africa—are included in the volume to explore contexts in which political considerations blocked formal vetting procedures from being used in the pursuit of justice.

The book also includes chapters on several cross-cutting themes, including: the collection and management of information in vetting processes; due process concerns; the relationship between vetting and other reforms; and the relationship between vetting and other transitional justice measures. The contributors to *Justice as Prevention* were drawn from a wide spectrum of fields and include international human rights lawyers, experts on police and judicial reform, and transitional justice scholars.

“This penetrating and timely collection of studies contributes much to our understanding of the role played by vetting in pursuit of the rule of law in post-conflict settings,” said Mark A. Kroeker, Director of the Police Division at the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. “In detailing the ways in which vetting is at the heart of ensuring public confidence in police and other law enforcement agencies in transitional societies, the book is a great contribution to the growing discipline of post-conflict reform.”

The book is the second in the “Advancing Transitional Justice Series” co-published by the SSRC and the ICTJ. The first, *What Happened to the Women? Gender and Reparations for Human Rights Violations* (December 2006), edited by Ruth Rubio-Marín, argued for the need to introduce a gender perspective into reparations programs to improve their responsiveness to female victims and their families.

About the Editors

Alexander Mayer-Rieckh manages the ICTJ's security system reform program. He was chief of the Human Rights Office at the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina; has worked for the UN in Rwanda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Timor-Leste; and has published pieces on post-conflict institutional reform and peacebuilding.

Pablo de Greiff is director of research at the ICTJ. He was associate professor of philosophy at SUNY Buffalo and a Laurance S. Rockefeller Fellow at the Center for Human Values, Princeton University. De Greiff is the editor of seven books, most recently *The Handbook of Reparations* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

About the ICTJ

The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) assists countries pursuing accountability for past mass atrocity or human rights abuse. The Center works in societies emerging from repressive rule or armed conflict, as well as in established democracies where historical injustices or systemic abuse remain unresolved.

In order to promote justice, peace, and reconciliation, government officials and nongovernmental advocates are likely to consider a variety of transitional justice approaches including both judicial and nonjudicial responses to human rights crimes. The ICTJ assists in the development of integrated, comprehensive, and localized approaches to transitional justice comprising five key elements: prosecuting perpetrators, documenting and acknowledging violations through non-judicial means such as truth commissions, reforming abusive institutions, providing reparations to victims, and facilitating reconciliation processes.

The Center is committed to building local capacity and generally strengthening the emerging field of transitional justice, and works closely with organizations and experts around the world to do so. By working in the field through local languages, the ICTJ provides comparative information, legal and policy analysis, documentation, and strategic research to justice and truth-seeking institutions, nongovernmental organizations, governments and others.

(www.ictj.org)

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